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MONDAY:
ANGELA FLORES
VIOLINIST
6:30 - 8:30pm

TUESDAY:
JEAN PAUL
SAXOPHONIST
6:30 - 8:30pm

WEDNESDAY:
EDDIE KROON
SINGER 4:00 - 6:00pm

MAILLEYN ALVARADO
VIOLINIST 6:30 - 8:30pm

KARAOKE 9:00 - 11:00pm

THURSDAY:
MARRYBELL MADURO
SINGER
6:30 - 8:30pm

FRIDAY:
RICKY THOMAS
GUITARIST
7:00 - 9:00pm

SATURDAY:
EDDIE KROON
SINGER
4:00 - 6:00pm

ANGELA FLORES
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Judge extends temporary block to huge cuts in National Institutes of Health research funding

By LAURAN NEERGAARD and MICHAEL CASEY
Associated Press

BOSTON (AP) — A federal judge on Friday again blocked the Trump administration's drastic cuts in medical research funding that many scientists say will endanger patients and delay new lifesaving studies. The new National Institutes of Health policy would strip research groups of hundreds of millions of dollars to cover so-called indirect expenses of studying Alzheimer's, cancer, heart disease and a host of other illnesses anything from clinical trials of new treatments to basic lab research that is the foundation for discoveries.

Separate lawsuits filed by a group of 22 states plus organizations representing universities, hospitals and research institutions nationwide sued to stop the cuts, saying they would cause "irreparable harm."

U.S. District Judge Angel



Medical researchers from universities and the National Institutes of Health rally near the Health and Human Services headquarters to protest federal budget cuts Wednesday, Feb. 19, 2025, in Washington.

Associated Press

Kelley had issued a temporary restraining order earlier this month blocking the cuts. During a court hearing in Boston Friday, Kelley, who was appointed by

Democratic President Joe Biden, extended that temporary block until she rules on an injunction, a more permanent decision. "Whatever she decides, it's

not going to be the end of the story. It's going to be appealed, probably all the way up to the Supreme Court because it's of enormous consequence to the

United States and to the rule of law," said Lawrence Gostin, a public health law expert at Georgetown University.

The states and research groups say the cuts are illegal and "in open defiance" of bipartisan congressional action during President Donald Trump's first term to prohibit it.

It "violates bipartisan appropriations law. I should know, I helped author that provision," Sen. Patty Murray, a Democrat from Washington state, said during Senate budget debate early Friday.

In court, Trump administration attorney Brian Lea said the issue is "broad discretion power of the executive branch" in how to allocate funds and that the government has "fully complied" with regulations. The administration also contends research groups haven't demonstrated irreparable injury. □

Top immigration enforcement official reassigned amid frustrations over mass deportation effort

By REBECCA SANTANA
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The top official in charge of



U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement officers wait to detain a person, Jan. 27, 2025, in Silver Spring, Md.

Associated Press

carrying out President Donald Trump's mass deportations agenda has been reassigned amid concerns that the deportation effort isn't moving fast enough. Homeland Security spokeswoman Tricia McLaughlin said in a statement Friday that Caleb Vitello, the acting director of Immigration and Customs Enforcement, was "no longer in an administrative role, but is instead overseeing all field and enforcement operations: finding, arresting, and deporting illegal aliens, which is a major priority of the President and Secre-

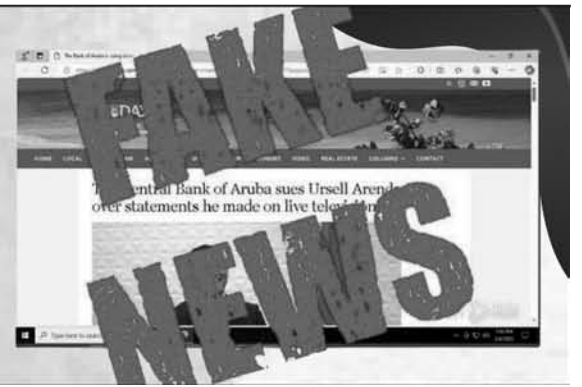
tary (Kristi) Noem." The statement made no mention of why Vitello, a career ICE official with more than two decades on the job, was reassigned or who his replacement will be. But White House officials have expressed frustration with the pace of deportations of people in the country illegally. The decision comes a little over one month into the new administration, showing how important immigration and carrying out mass deportations are to the Trump administration. ICE specifically, its Enforce-

ment and Removal Operations arm is the key agency tasked with carrying out the Republican president's pledge of mass deportations of people in the country illegally during his second term. Last week Tom Homan, the White House border czar tasked with carrying out Trump's immigration agenda across the federal government, said arrests inside the U.S. as opposed to people arrested as they're crossing the border are about three times higher than they were this time last year, under President Joe Biden. □

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Lawsuit filed by 17 states against abortion accommodations in the workplace can proceed

By **CLAIRE SAVAGE**
Associated Press

A lawsuit filed by 17 states challenging federal rules entitling workers to time off and other accommodations for abortions may proceed, a federal appeals court ruled.

The Eighth Circuit Court's decision on Thursday reverses Eastern District of Arkansas U.S. District Judge D.P. Marshall, Jr.'s dismissal of the case in June after he found that the states lacked standing to sue. Eighth Circuit Chief Judge Steven M. Colloton, who was appointed by former President George W. Bush in 2003, wrote in Thursday's opinion that the states do have standing since they are subject to the federal rules.

Led by Republican state attorneys general in Tennessee and Arkansas, the 17 states sued the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission in April challenging its rules on how to implement the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act, a 2022 bipartisan law requiring employers to make "reasonable accommodations" for pregnant or postpartum employees.

In addition to more routine pregnancy workplace accommodations like time off for prenatal appointments, more bathroom breaks, or permission to carry snacks, the rules say that workers can ask for time off to obtain an abortion and recover from the procedure. "The Biden-era EEOC's attempt to turn a good law into an ideological weapon to force broad elective abortion accommodations is illegal," Tennessee Attorney General Jonathan Skrmetti said in an emailed statement. "The EEOC's



The emblem of the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) is shown on a podium in Vail, Colorado, Feb. 16, 2016, in Denver.

unlawful regulations undermine the constitutional authority of the people's elected representatives and we are vindicated by the Court's decision to let our suit proceed."

The lawsuit joined by state attorneys in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Carolina, South Dakota, Utah and West Virginia is one of several legal challenges to the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act rules. One case in Texas seeks to overturn the law in its entirety.

The Eighth Circuit Court's decision to revive the case comes after a 2022 U.S. Supreme Court ruling opened the door to state abortion bans, and as bills to track and charge women who

get abortions with murder have gotten attention in Missouri, North Dakota and Oklahoma state legislatures this month.

The EEOC, which enforces U.S. anti-discrimination laws, during former President Joe Biden's administration published regulations that provide guidance for employers and workers on how to implement the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act. In them, the agency said that workers can ask for time off to obtain an abortion and recover from the procedure, along with pregnancy-related medical conditions like miscarriage, stillbirth and lactation. Citing numerous court rulings, the EEOC in its regulations said it was conforming to decades of legal precedent establishing that pregnan-

cy-related discrimination laws include abortion.

But many Republican lawmakers, including Louisiana Sen. Bill Cassidy, who co-sponsored the bill, were furious when the EEOC stated that the law covered abortions. Both Republican EEOC commissioners voted against the rules at the time.

A spokesperson for the EEOC said the agency will "refrain from discussing litigation" but referred The Associated Press to Acting Chair Andrea Lucas' position on the Commission's PWFA regulations, which she voted against.

"I support elements of the final rule.

However, I am unable to approve it because it purports to broaden the scope of the statute in ways that,

in my view, cannot reasonably be reconciled with the text," she wrote in a statement at the time explaining her decision to vote against the rules.

The EEOC has undergone significant change since President Donald Trump took office last month. After naming Lucas, a Republican, as acting chair, Trump fired two Democratic commissioners of the five-member bipartisan EEOC before their terms expired in an unprecedented move. Had the commissioners been allowed to carry out their terms, the EEOC would have had a Democratic majority well into Trump's term. The administration also dismissed Karla Gilbride as the EEOC's general counsel, replacing her with Andrew Rogers as acting counsel.

Without a quorum, the EEOC cannot rescind its own rules, although Lucas in the statement said she intends for the EEOC to reconsider portions of the rules she believes are unsupported by law once a quorum is re-established.

The Department of Justice represents the EEOC in court, and under Trump, it remains to be seen whether it will continue to fight the states' lawsuit.

Inimai Chettiar, president of advocacy group A Better Balance, which spearheaded a decade-long campaign for the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act and filed an amicus brief in support of the EEOC alongside National Women's Law Center, American Civil Liberties Union, and several more organizations, on Thursday called the Eighth Circuit Court's decision "an attack on reproductive choice." □

L.A. mayor dismisses fire chief over response to most destructive wildfire in city history last month

By MICHAEL R. BLOOD
Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Six weeks after the most destructive wildfire in city history, Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass ousted the city's fire chief Friday amid a public rift over preparations for a potential fire and finger-pointing between the chief and City Hall over responsibility for the devastation. Bass said she is removing Chief Kristin Crowley immediately. "Bringing new leadership to the Fire Department is what our city needs," the mayor said in a statement.

At a news conference Friday afternoon, Bass said that Crowley had refused to do an after-action report on the wildfires.

"We know that 1,000 firefighters that could have been on duty on the morning the fires broke out were instead sent home on Chief Crowley's watch," Bass said.

Bass said Crowley has previously called her in advance of weather that raises fire



Los Angeles Fire Department Chief Kristin Crowley talks during a news conference at Harbor-UCLA Medical Center in the West Carson area of Los Angeles on Thursday, Feb. 15, 2024.

Associated Press

risk, but that she did not do that in early January.

"She has my cellphone, she knows she can call me 24/7," Bass said.

"The business of the fire department and the city will continue" while the search for a permanent replacement is underway, she said.

Bass said she and Crowley had a "very brief" meeting on Friday. The Los Angeles Fire Department said it had no comment about the ousting of the chief. "We are aware of the Mayor's announcement and have no further comments or interviews on this matter at

this time," the department said in a statement.

The Palisades Fire began during heavy winds Jan. 7, destroying or damaging nearly 8,000 homes, businesses and other structures and killing at least 12 people in the LA neighborhood. Another wind-whipped

fire started the same day in suburban Altadena, a community to the east, killing at least 17 people and destroying or damaging more than 10,000 homes and other buildings.

Bass has been facing criticism for being in Africa as part of a presidential delegation on the day the fires started, even though weather reports had warned of dangerous fire conditions in the days before she left.

In televised interviews this week, Bass acknowledged she made a mistake by leaving the city. But she inferred that she wasn't aware of the looming danger when she jetted around the globe to attend the inauguration of Ghanaian President John Dramani Mahama. She faulted Crowley for failing to alert her about the potentially explosive fire conditions. Crowley has publicly criticized the city for budget cuts that she said made it harder for firefighters to do their jobs. □

Luigi Mangione set for first court appearance since his arraignment in UnitedHealthcare CEO's death

By MICHAEL R. SISAK
Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — The man accused of fatally shooting the CEO of UnitedHealthcare in New York City and leading authorities on a five-day search is scheduled to be in court Friday for the first time since his December arraignment on state murder and terror charges.

Luigi Mangione, 26, is set for a hearing in state court in Manhattan. Prosecutors and Mangione's defense lawyers are expected to provide updates on the status of the case and Judge Gregory Carro could set deadlines for pretrial paperwork and possibly even a trial date. Mangione has pleaded not guilty to multiple counts of murder, including murder as an act of ter-

rorism, in the Dec. 4 killing of Brian Thompson outside a midtown Manhattan hotel. The executive was ambushed and shot on a sidewalk as he walked to an investor conference. Mangione also faces federal charges that could

carry the possibility of the death penalty. He is being held in a Brooklyn federal jail alongside several other high-profile defendants, including Sean "Diddy" Combs and Sam Bankman-Fried.

Prosecutors have said the

two cases will proceed on parallel tracks, with the state charges expected to go to trial first. The maximum sentence for the state charges is life in prison without parole. A Feb. 24 hearing in Pennsylvania on charges of possessing an unlicensed firearm, forgery and providing false identification to police was canceled.

In a statement posted on a website for his legal defense, Mangione said: "I am overwhelmed by and grateful for everyone who has written me to share their stories and express their support. Powerfully, this support has transcended political, racial, and even class divisions."

The killing prompted some to voice their resentment at U.S. health insurers, with Mangione attracting a

cult following as a stand-in for frustrations over coverage denials and hefty medical bills. A poll taken in the wake of the shooting showed most Americans believe health insurance profits and coverage denials share blame.

Several dozen members of the public showed up to get into Friday's hearing, one wearing a green "Luigi" hat from the "Mario Bros." video game franchise.

The killing also has sent shock waves through the corporate world, rattling executives who say they saw a spike in threats.

Mangione was arrested in a Pennsylvania McDonald's on Dec. 9. Police said he was carrying a gun that matched the one used in the shooting and a fake ID. □



Luigi Nicholas Mangione leaves the Blair County Courthouse in Hollidaysburg, Pa., Dec. 19, 2024.

Associated Press

Sinn Féin leaders won't attend St. Patrick's event at White House to protest U.S. stance on Gaza

By BRIAN MELLEY

Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Sinn Féin's leaders said Friday they will not attend a traditional St. Patrick's Day event next month at the White House as a protest against President Donald Trump's stance on Gaza.

The Irish party's leader Mary Lou McDonald said the Trump administration's position was "catastrophically" wrong and she was taking "a principled stance against the threat of mass expulsion of the Palestinian people from Gaza."

Trump has proposed removing about 2 million Palestinians from Gaza so the U.S. can own and rebuild what he called the "Riviera of the Middle East." Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has welcomed the idea, but it's been universally rejected by Palestinians and Arab countries, caused concern from other world leaders and thrown a ceasefire into doubt.



Ireland's Prime Minister Leo Varadkar, right, presents President Joe Biden with a bowl of Shamrocks during a St. Patrick's Day reception in the East Room of the White House, Sunday, March 17, 2024. Associated Press

"I followed with growing concern what's happening on the ground in Gaza and the West Bank, and like many other Irish people, have listened in horror to calls from the president

of the United States for the mass expulsion of the Palestinian people from their homes and the permanent seizure of Palestinian lands," McDonald said. She was joined in the boy-

cott by Northern Ireland First Minister Michelle O'Neill, the party's vice president, who said she was standing "on the side of humanity." The announcement was widely criticized by Sinn Fé-

in's political opponents.

Irish premier Micheál Martin, who said he hadn't received a formal invitation to Washington but expects the meeting to happen and plans to attend, accused Sinn Féin of playing politics. Martin, leader of center-right Fianna Fáil, said it's an important opportunity to discuss trade and present Ireland's perspective on Ukraine and the Middle East.

"We need a consolidation of the ceasefire, we need a massive surge of humanitarian aid into Gaza, and we need to create a political pathway to a two-state solution," Martin said. Left-of-center Sinn Féin has won a large percentage of seats in the Irish parliament in the last two elections, but has been shut out of any coalition government because of its historic ties to the Irish Republican Army during three decades of violence Northern Ireland. □

Missing the cold, the Dutch relive highs and lows of famed skating race 40 years on

By MOLLY QUELL

Associated Press

THE HAGUE, Netherlands (AP) — Climate change has put the prospect of an actual new edition of the iconic Elfstedentocht skating race over frozen canals and lakes on thin ice, but the Netherlands on Friday relished the drama of the competition from 1985 on TV.

The Dutch public broadcaster NOS was re-airing the 12-hour showing of the grueling 135-mile 11-cities tour in the northern province of Friesland on its 40th anniversary.

The race involves thousands of ice skaters leaving in the pre-dawn cold, with perhaps only 100 with a shot at victory and the rest just hoping to finish.

The last time the Netherlands held the event was 1997, and as average temperatures rise, the likelihood of another Elfstedentocht melts. On Friday the noon temperature in the finishing town Leeuwarden stood at

14C (57F).

The prospect of the 1985 competition had the country in turmoil. Initially the race was set for Jan. 20 but was canceled after a thaw. After nearly a month of anticipation, and with

only three days' notice, organizers announced the race was on for Feb. 21, with race chairperson Jan Siphema announcing the famous words: "It sil heve," or "It will happen" in the Frisian language. □



Skaters pass a windmill at the village of Birdaard, northern Netherlands during the "Elfstedentocht" (eleven-cities-course) race on Jan. 4, 1997. Associated Press



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China issued 'disconcerting' warning of live-fire exercises to planes flying above, Australia says

By **ROD MCGUIRK** and
CHARLOTTE GRAHAM-MCLAY

Associated Press

MELBOURNE, Australia (AP)

— Airlines were over the Tasman Sea crossing between Australia and New Zealand when the Chinese navy warned they were flying over a secret live-fire exercise, Australian Defense Minister Richard Marles said on Friday.

Regulator Airservices Australia warned commercial pilots of a potential hazard in airspace between the countries as three Chinese warships conducted exercises off the Australian east coast.

But Marles said Australian authorities only learned about China's live-firing plans in international waters midway between Australia and New Zealand from the airlines.

"To be clear, we weren't notified by China," Marles told Australian Broadcasting Corp. radio in Perth.

"What China did was put out a notification that it was intending to engage in



In this photo provided by the Australian Defense Force, the People's Liberation Army-Navy Jiangkai-class frigate Hengyang travels in the Torres Strait off Australia's coast, on Feb. 11, 2025. **Associated Press**

live firing. By that, I mean a broadcast that was picked up by airlines or literally ... commercial planes that were flying across the Tasman," Marles said.

"This was very disconcerting for the planes that were flying," he added.

Three flights from Sydney bound for the New Zealand cities of Christchurch and Queenstown were in the air on Friday morning before they were first warned by a Chinese warship of a live-fire exercise, media reported.

All changed course. The three airlines involved, Emirates, Qantas and Virgin Australia, did not comment.

Marles said the Australian navy would typically give 12 to 24 hours' notice of a live-firing exercise to al-

low airlines time to properly plan around it.

But he said all flights were able to divert and no one was put in danger.

The warships frigate Hengyang, cruiser Zunyi and replenishment vessel Weishanhu are exercising a freedom of navigation in international waters off the Australian east coast of a kind that angers Beijing when exercised by the Australian military in the disputed South China Sea.

During a regular Chinese foreign ministry briefing on Friday, spokesperson Guo Jiakun said China's military had organized its fleet to conduct high seas exercises.

"The drill was carried out in a safe, standard and professional manner in compliance with relevant international law and international practice" Guo said.

Australian defense officials were uncertain whether any live fire of weapons had occurred. The risk had since passed, Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said. □

Following U.S. lead, Canada designates 7 Latin American criminal groups as terrorist entities

By **JIM MORRIS**
Associated Press

OTTAWA, Ontario (AP)

— Canada is designating seven Latin American criminal organizations as terrorist entities under the country's Criminal Code, giving Canadian law enforcement another tool in the fight against fentanyl trafficking, Public Safety Minister David McGuinty said Thursday.

The list includes Mexico's Sinaloa Cartel, Jalisco New Generation Cartel and La Nueva Familia Michoacana, and was announced a day after the U.S. government formally designated eight Latin American organized crime groups as "foreign terrorist organizations."

"The measures will help keep fentanyl off Canadian streets and from en-

tering the United States," McGuinty told a news conference.

The announcement was Canada's latest response to U.S. President Donald Trump's claim that the

flow of fentanyl and illegal immigration into the U.S. were behind his threats of imposing a 25% tariff on all Canadian goods — with the exception of 10% on energy.



Canada's fentanyl czar Kevin Brosseau, center, looks on as Minister of Public Safety David McGuinty, left, speaks during a press conference following a tour of the Canada Border Services Agency Lansdowne port of entry in Lansdowne, Ontario, Feb. 12, 2025.

Associated Press

Trump has paused the implementation of those tariffs until at least March 4.

U.S. border patrol statistics show that less than 1% of all fentanyl seized is found at the northern border. But Canadian officials have expressed a willingness to do more to combat the deadly synthetic opioid.

The other organizations designated as terrorist groups are Cartel del Golfo and Carteles Unidos, also from Mexico; Tren de Aragua, in Venezuela, and the Mara Salvatrucha, or MS-13, which started in California but became a dominant criminal force in El Salvador.

The designation effectively freezes a group's assets and property.

"Banks and brokerages will freeze these entities' assets, which can then be

the subject of seizure, restraint or forfeiture," said McGuinty.

It is also an offense to knowingly participate in, or contribute to, any activity of a listed terrorist group. The listing process begins with intelligence reports that indicate whether an organization has knowingly carried out, attempted to carry out, participated in or facilitated a terrorist activity.

McGuinty said listing a group as a terrorist entity follows a rigorous process that "must meet a legal threshold."

If the public safety minister believes that threshold has been met, the minister may recommend to the federal cabinet that the organization be added to the list. □

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Aruba Tourism Authority honored loyal visitors at Aruba Beach Club Resort!

The Aruba Tourism Authority recently had the great pleasure of recognizing Goodwill Ambassadors of Aruba. The honorees were respectively honored with a certificate for their years of visits, loyalty, and love for the island of Aruba.

The honorary certification is presented on behalf of the Minister of Tourism as a token of appreciation and to say "Masha Danki" to guests who have visited Aruba 10, 20, or 35 years or more consecutively.

The three levels of honor are as follows:

Distinguished Visitor (10>years consecutively visiting Aruba)

Goodwill Ambassador (20>years consecutively visiting Aruba)

Emerald Ambassador (35>years consecutively visiting Aruba)

The honorees were:

Goodwill Ambassadors

Mr. Edward & Mrs. Marilyn Dahlby from Lakeville Minnesota, United States.

Mr. Jorgino Willems representing the Aruba Tourism Authority, and staff members of Aruba Beach Club Resort bestowed the certificate upon the honorees, presented them with gifts, and thanked them for choosing Aruba as their favorite vacation destination, as their home away from home.

The top reasons for returning to Aruba provided by the honorees were:

- Aruba's scenery.
- Aruba's weather.
- Aruba's people.
- Aruba's restaurants.
- "The feeling of relaxation washes over



us as soon as we set foot on the island"

On behalf of the Aruba Tourism Authority, we would like to express our sincere gratitude and appreciation to the honorees for their continued visits to the "One Happy Island". □

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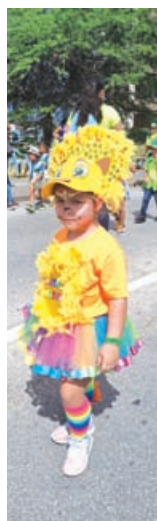
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Treasure Cove | El Patio Tacos & Tequila | M8 Boutique
Fusion Restaurant, Tapas, Wine & Piano Bar

Oranjestad School Parade Filled with Joy and Fantasy



Yesterday morning, students from preparatory and elementary schools in Oranjestad held their school parade. A parade full of joy and fantasy, with children enjoying the infectious rhythm of carnival music.

The parade featured a total of seven groups, consisting of 13 preparatory and elementary schools. By 9:30 in the morning, the parade departed from the Entertainment Center and ended at Plaza Libertador Betico Croes.

The participating schools were Reina Beatrix School, Prinses Amalia Basisschool, Arco Iris Kleuterschool, Play2Whizz Campus, Mon Plaisir, Pius X School, Fatima College, Frere Bonifacius, Rosario College, Colegio Conrado Coronel, Scol Paso pa Futuro, Scol Soeur Juliette, and Sint Dominicus College.

A large number of people were also present, standing along the route to enjoy and cheer on the children during their school parade.

This is the first school parade of the 71st Carnival, and next Friday, Noord will hold its own school parade. It will also be the turn for the secondary schools of Oranjestad and San Nicolas to hold their school parades. □

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Visit the historic museum at Fort Zoutman!

(Oranjestad)—Located in the middle of downtown Oranjestad, situated right next to the government building “Cocolishi”, is one of the oldest buildings of Aruba: Fort Zoutman. First constructed in 1796, this site has been used (or left unused) in many ways and have survived eras of war and attempted dismantling.

When anyone refers to Fort Zoutman, they are actually referring to two separate buildings that, over the years, have been merged: the fort and the tower. That's right, the iconic 5-story, squared tower was not part of the original structure of the fort, and is actually called “Willem III Toren”. Constructed in 1867, this tower was named after the then-reigning king of The Netherlands, Willem III. Willem III Toren was originally a light tower, but after a request from Lieutenant Governor Jan Helenus in 1866, it also became a bell tower. The fort itself was originally constructed to protect the commerce bay of Paardenbaai from pirates and other disreputable characters roaming the Caribbean Sea. Unlike the Willem III Toren, Fort Zoutman had a more

tumultuous past, including the on-and-off reception of unwanted members of the English military several times (The Netherlands was at constant war with England back in the colonial era).

Over the years, both the fort and the tower had functioned as different government center points, including a tax and stamps office. For some time these two buildings also housed a police precinct and jail, and even experienced abandonment until the Cultural Center Aruba Foundation (CCA) petitioned for its renovation in 1964, turning the site into the Historic Museum it currently is. Despite its small size, The Historic Museum guards a rich depository of the commercial, military and social history of Oranjestad, offering a glance into how the social culture of the town came to be. If you are interested in history and want to learn more about Aruba, then Fort Zoutman should definitely be included into your itinerary.

The museum is open Monday to Friday from 9am-6pm, and Saturday from 10am-2pm.

Source: The Old Fort of Aruba by Jan Hartog.



Blackstone Beach



(Oranjestad)—Named after its most recognizable feature, the Blackstone Beach almost represents the opposite of the typical Aruban beaches. For one, it has black sand and is covered in black smooth stones. Secondly, it lies on the northern side of the island, away from the white sandy beaches of in the southern region. So, if you feel up for something different—or if it's opposite day, visit the Blackstone Beach.

Blackstone Beach shows the more natural side of Aruba: the stones that cover the beaches and the shape of it has been crafted for thousand years via volcanic eruptions, coral reef movements and wave activity of the rural northern part of the island.

Located further east to the Natu-

ral Bridge and Andicuri Beach, the Blackstone Beach is relatively easy to access. Once you get passed the Ayo Rock Formation, take the Andicuri road leading up to Andicuri Beach. There, you can park your car and take a 1km hike towards Blackstone Beach.

This beach forms part of the Arikok National Park and is therefore a site that is preserved. This is why it is also relatively untouched by commercial influences. Despite being called a beach, do note that it is not advised to swim in the water, as the current is very strong and can easily stray you further in the wild ocean. However, you can still enjoy a spectacular view of the stones and the northern ocean that stretches out in front of the beach and take a picture with your friends or family! □

Planning on snorkeling? Get to know our Candelchi!



(Oranjestad)—If you're ever planning on snorkeling during your vacation on Aruba, you may spot fish that you can't recognize. One of these may be the "Candelchi" (Squirrelfish), a common, yet shy fish that swims all year long in the waters of Aruba.

Let's talk about the names of fish. Do you know your fish? The Department of Agriculture, Livestock, and Fisheries, known as Santa Rosa, offers this informative article that illustrate some fish and their names in Papiamentu.

Candelchi, Squirrelfish, *Holocentrus adscensionis*:

Candelchi actually refers to the entire squirrelfish family or, as some say, when we say candelchi, we mean several different species but without distinguishing them by species. In this picture, we are showing the most common one in our waters, which is called squirrelfish in English or scientifically known as *Holocentrus adscensionis*.

Under candelchi, we in Aruba generally refer to all the different species of squirrelfish. They all look alike and it's really difficult to distinguish between them.

The squirrelfish family is distinguished by the following characteristics. They are heart-shaped with pink or red hues and often show heart-shaped streaks between the scales along the body. They have hard fins and are always armed. Over at our sister island Curaçao, they are called "bari di clabo" (nail barrel) for that reason.

In our waters, there are 7 to 8 types or species present and they are sometimes caught and seen occasionally. They can be distinguished by different marks such as

color on the dorsal spine or marks on the body.

In Aruba:

Candelchi are found on reefs or areas with structure in the water where they can hide. Although they prefer to hunt for food at night, they are also active during the day. They are edible and delicious when prepared dry and crispy with lime. It is particularly challenging to scale the fish, which is why it is not one of the favorites among fishermen. They often live in groups. □



A guide for the perfect picture

Where to find the most Instagrammable places in Oranjestad

(Oranjestad)—Imagine, you're taking a stroll in the city center, and you want to take the most picture-perfect photo to show your friends and family back home and online. It seems like the perfect spot can be hard to find, but Oranjestad is full of great spots for a quick snapshot! Here are the most Instagrammable places in Oranjestad.

"I LOVE ARUBA"

Right on Paardenbaai Plaza, near the harbor entrance, you will spot a giant sign that reads "I LOVE ARUBA". A great first stop for a quick shot with the family, this spot is among the few that has become a

favorite among tourists, especially those that are visiting Aruba through a cruise vacation.

Speaking of giant signs that read "Aruba" (because there can never be too many), there is another sign you can find along the Linear Park, in front of Talk of the Town Hotel. It may be a long walk from the harbor to get there, but while you're at it, check out these other spots along the way!

The sitting bull

Yes, you read that right; right in the heart of the city center, in front of the Crystal Casino in the Renaissance Mall, there is a black bull sitting on a bench, waiting for you to take a picture with it. Ok, so it's not a real bull, but "I took a picture with a sitting bull" sounds like a great conversation opener.



ting on a bench, waiting for you to take a picture with it. Ok, so it's not a real bull, but "I took a picture with a sitting bull" sounds like a great conversation opener.

See if you can also spot the cow on the roof!

Wooden Swing on Plaza Daniel Leo

While you're in front of the Renaissance Mall, check out the wooden swing on the other side of the mall

on Plaza Daniel Leo. Another favorite among visitors wanting a cute snapshot for Instagram. Just pass through the Renaissance Mall and find this gem in front of the back entrance!

Since you've made it this far, one question: How many blue horses have you spotted already?

Renaissance Dock

Last but certainly not least,

the Renaissance Dock is the perfect spot to take a beautiful picture, especially at sunset. The dock is located behind the Renaissance Market Place, and runs from the Renaissance Marina up to Renaissance Beach and Wilhelmina Park. This spot offers a gorgeous view of the ocean and sunset, accompanied by the soft waves crashing on the shoreline. You may even spot some iguanas! □



The district of Savaneta: The capital before Oranjestad

(Oranjestad)—Before Oranjestad became the island nation's capital, Aruba's first capital was the district of Savaneta. Here is where the cultural identity of Aruba was born, and from where the rest of the island developed into what it is today.

Savaneta is said to have been the first place where the Caquetio inhabitants first stepped foot on the island. Though there isn't hard evidence to back this up, but considering the legend of the Cacique Arua, it is believed that there were already movements on Aruba—and Savaneta—around 88 AD.

The Caquetios probably made their way to the island either from Venezuela, Colombia or other Caribbean islands in the region, but with good weather it was relatively easy for them to travel back and forth in their canoes. So, since the Caquetios discovered the island, Aruba found her first form of civilization.

It wasn't until 1499 when Aruba met another group of people who set foot on the island: the Spanish explorer Alonso de Ojeda. De Ojeda first took notice of Aruba off the coast of Venezuela, during his exploration of the Latin American country. This was on August 9th, 1499. However, de Ojeda didn't actually sail to the island till 4 days later, on August 23rd, 1499. This was the beginning of the Spanish era on Aruba (1499-1636).

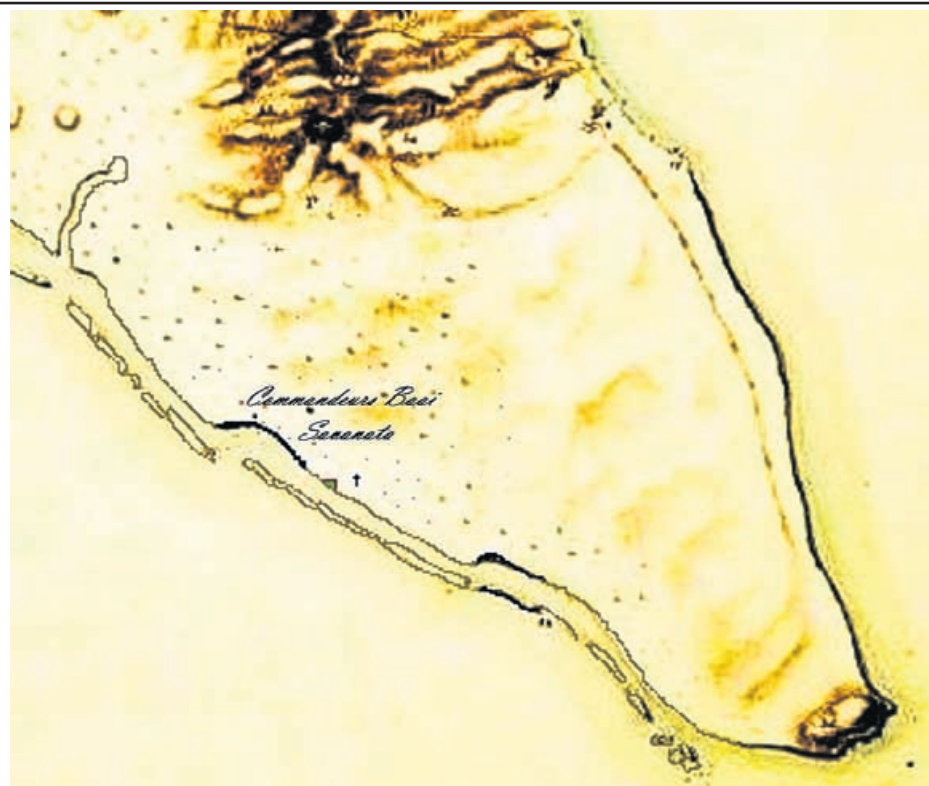
Alonso usually didn't stop at every island or land he saw, especially not in the Caribbean. He would often take notice of land from afar and continue sailing. However, Aruba was an exception. He had heard that there were "quebracho" trees on the island, which were commonly used to produce dye or paint. But since these trees could not be found in Savaneta, he continued to search

in the area of what is now known as Santa Cruz. The best way to transport the tree barks was via a route passing through Savaneta, and so the first road between Savaneta and Santa Cruz was made.

The Dutch colonial era (1636-1805) During the 80-year war between The Netherlands and Spain, Dutch explorers and merchants began to travel to the ABC islands. Once they landed in Aruba, they deported the small Arawakan and Spanish community that was living on the island. This was the beginning of colonization of the ABC islands by the Dutch empire. Around the same, the West Indian Company (WIC) was born. Bonaire and Curacao were mostly used for plantations, where the Dutch had transported slaves from Africa. Aruba, on the other hand, was mostly used to raise cattle and to house the haring factory. The Dutch had often forced the indigenous community to work for them.

In 1636, when the Netherlands won the war against Spain, the country surrendered the islands to the Dutch.

The Dutch administration appointed the island's first commander, an Irish man named N. Williams. Because the Dutch were interested in other Caribbean islands and countries in South America, they imported Dutch merchants and business men, all of whom resided in Savaneta. This way, Savaneta officially became the island's first capital.



Commandeursbaai (Commander's Bay) at Savaneta

However, at the end of the 18th century, the commander at the time, J.R. Lauffer, moved his office to what is now "Horse Bay" in Oranjestad. Because the highest office on the island moved away from Savaneta, the capital lost its title to what was called then Playa.

How Savaneta got its name

The name Savaneta probably has a Spanish origin. It was said that when the Spanish climbed a hill called Yara, they saw that the area was mostly open and had no big trees. In Spanish, such a land area is called a "sabana".

Because of its land surface, Savaneta was a great place to construct

cattle farms. From here, the farmer culture on Aruba was born. Before the Aruban Gold Rush and the construction of the Refinery in San Nicolas, most residents were farmers, and Savaneta had many inhabitants that farmed fruits and vegetables. They also continued the tradition of raising cattle, like goat, sheep, pigs and horses. Savaneta was one of the first places on the island to have a general farming culture. From this culture, many other traditions were born, like the Dera Gay Holiday that we celebrate every year on June 24th.

Source: Historia di Savaneta (History of Savaneta) by Adolf "Dufi" Kock.



Alonso de Ojeda



"Quebracho" (Kibrahacha) tree; used to make dye and paint

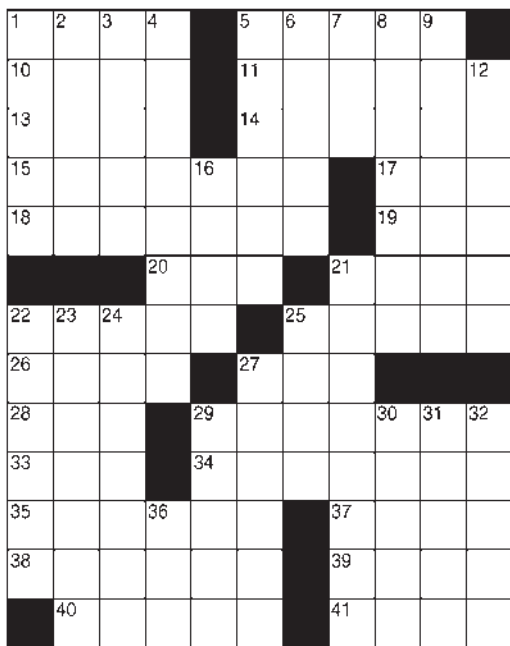
CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

- ACROSS**
- 34 Perfectly
1 "Get lost!" behaved
5 Energize, 35 Mortises'
as a partners
crowd 37 Split
10 Like bulls 38 Big
and rams hammer
11 Angler 39 Smooth
with a net 40 Attire
13 Shortly, in 41 Car scar
poems



- DOWN**
- 14 Prof's protection
15 Expose and destroy
17 Reggae's forerunner
18 Lease signers
19 Home of the Trojans
20 Stage signal
21 High-strung
22 Ship bodies
25 Lends a hand
26 Fencing sword
27 Nearest star
28 "— tree falls ..."
29 Muscle connectors
33 Knight's address
- 9 Starts to show
25 Sus-pended
12 Gasps, say
16 Burden
21 Offered in payment
22 Bank jobs
23 Toward
24 Student
27 Taste and smell
29 Distinct flavors
30 Green hue
31 David of "Separate Tables"
32 Fragrance
36 Poem of praise



2-26

AXYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

2-26

CRYPTOQUOTE

H OPUOAZ BFJEJF VG IJPHJLJ

VMJ IJZV GE JIJFAIGRA; HV

ZOLJZ ZG WTXM VFGTIPJ.

— FTRAOF R CHBPHSD

Cryptoquote: NOBODY HAS EVER MEASURED, EVEN POETS, HOW MUCH A HEART CAN HOLD. — ZELDA FITZGERALD

Cruise ship Schedule: February 17 - 23 2025

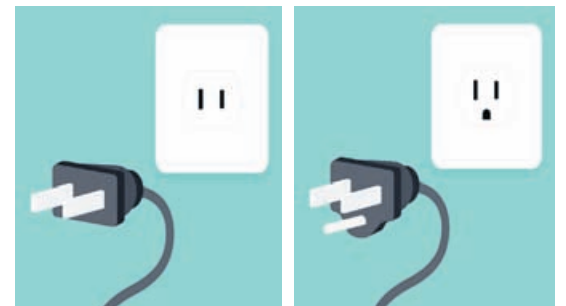
			ARR	DEPT	BERTH	
MON	17	RESILIENT LADY	09.00	23.59	C	1
TUE	18	CARNIVAL HORIZON	09.00	23.00	C	1
		NORWEGIAN VIVA	13.00	21.00	I	1
WED	19	ROTTERDAM	08.00	17.00	B	1
		EMERALD PRINCESS	09.00	****	C	1
		CELEBRITY REFLECTION	08.00	21.00	I	1
THU	20	EMERALD PRINCESS - Dept.	****	22.00	C	
SAT	22	OCEANIA SIRENA	11.00	21.00	C	1
SUN	23	EXPLORA II	08.00	21.00	C	1

Helpful tips for your stay on Aruba

(Oranjestad)—When traveling to another country, especially for the first time, it is always better to be over-prepared than under-prepared. That is why we have a list of basic but important information that we think may come in handy to Aruba's visitors.

Electrical power

Aruba generally operates on 110V to 127V supply voltage and 60Hz. There are also three types of outlets used on the island: type A with two flat prongs; type B with two flat and one grounding prong, and on occasion, type F with two round prong and two earth clips on the side. However, Type A is most commonly found in homes and establishments.



Drinking water

The water that flows through the sinks of every house, hotels and other establishments is distilled and perfectly safe to drink. Aruba's drinking water exceeds WHO's international standards for water quality, so there is no need to buy bottled water from the store.



Supermarket hours

Supermarket hours may vary depending on where you are staying on the island. Generally though, most supermarkets are open from 8am to 9 or 10pm, Monday through Saturday. On Sundays, supermarkets generally close earlier; mostly around 2pm.



Safety

Since February 2024, Aruba has been categorized as the safest country in the Caribbean by The Telegraph, and many tourist that visit have often told us how they feel safe to explore the island or walk around at night. However, rare incidents do occur, so keep yourself and your belongings safe.



IRS layoffs could hurt revenue collection and foil efforts to go after rich tax dodgers, experts say



The sign outside the Internal Revenue Service building is seen. May 4, 2021, in Washington.

Associated Press

By **FATIMA HUSSEIN**

Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The layoffs of roughly 7,000 IRS probationary workers beginning this week likely mean the end of the agency's plan to go after high-wealth tax dodgers and could spell disaster for revenue collections, experts say.

The majority of employees shown the door at the federal tax collector are newly hired workers focused on compliance, which includes ensuring that taxpayers are abiding by the tax code and paying delinquent debts, among other duties.

The IRS layoffs, one of the largest purges of probationary workers this year across the government, could also hurt customer

service and tax return processing during tax season this year, the union representing Treasury Department employees warned Thursday.

The upheaval comes less than two months before the tax filing deadline and as the Department of Government Efficiency under Trump adviser Elon Musk seeks to shrink the size of the federal workforce in an effort to radically cut spending and restructure the government's priorities. Vanessa Williamson, a senior fellow at the Urban-Brookings Tax Policy Center, said on a Thursday call with reporters that the layoffs at the IRS will disproportionately harm enforcement efforts.

"When you underpay and understaff the IRS, the

agency doesn't have the power or the resources it needs to go after wealthy tax evaders with their high priced lawyers," she said, adding, "The result is, of course, a disaster for revenue."

The Inflation Reduction Act, signed into law by President Joe Biden in 2022, gave the IRS \$80 billion and the ability to hire tens of thousands of new employees to help with customer service and enforcement as well as new technology to update the tax collection agency, though congressional Republicans later clawed back some of the money.

Former IRS Commissioner Daniel Werfel, appointed by Biden, placed a particular focus on aggressively auditing high-income tax cheats as well as executives who use business aircraft for their personal use while still writing it off as a

tax expense and wealthy people who sought to get favorable tax treatment through Puerto Rico without meeting certain tax requirements. □

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Is spending all day on your feet at work an occupational hazard?

By CATHY BUSSEWITZ

Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — As a citizen of both France and America, Margaux Lantelme has noticed a difference in how store cashiers work in the two countries: in France, they do their jobs sitting down. In the U.S., where Lantelme works a register at REI, cashiers typically spend eight hours a day on their feet.

For Lantelme, a former kayaking instructor, prolonged standing can trigger flare-ups of chronic pain that limit her mobility. She requested a chair to use during her shift and got one. But after a change in management, she had to fill out paperwork to keep the chair, which required multiple doctor visits and insurance co-payments over a period of months. She's still waiting for final approval.

"Not having access to a chair without approval from a doctor, which costs money and time and energy, is really ridiculous," Lantelme said. "I personally think that people should be able to have access to seating at work anytime they need it."

Aches, pains and complications

Standing for long periods can lead to low back pain, fatigue, muscle pain and leg swelling, and it can increase the risk of cardiovascular problems and pregnancy complications, according to a review conducted by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health. Researchers there concluded that movement, whether walking or shifting from a standing to a seated or leaning position, appeared to be the best way of reducing those health hazards.

Being on one's feet for an extended time also can lead to chronic venous insufficiency, a disease in which damaged veins impact blood circulation, according to the Association of periOperative Registered Nurses, which represents operating room nurses.

The association recommends trying "fatigue-re-



Associated Press Illustration / Annie Ng

ducing techniques such as alternate propping one foot on a footstool, the use of anti-fatigue mats, using a sit-stand stool and wearing supportive footwear," said Lisa Spruce, senior director of evidence-based perioperative practices at AORN.

The right to sit down

Many jobs besides nursing require extended standing: department store sales clerks, hairdressers, surgeons, restaurant cooks and airport workers are just some of the people who perform their roles on their feet.

Cecilia Ortiz, 43, used to work as an airport wheelchair attendant in Phoenix. "It takes a really hard toll on the knees," she said. The break room had three or four chairs, which wasn't enough for everyone, so workers often went to the hallway and sat on the floor, Ortiz said.

She said she once got written up by her boss for sitting down at an electronic device charging station for 15 minutes after she'd been on her feet for five hours without a break.

Ortiz now works for a warehouse that provides supplies to the airport, and when she needs to sit, she can.

"It's not so strict over there. If we needed to sit down for any reason there wouldn't be a problem," Ortiz said.

Her former employer, Prospect Airport Services, said it adheres to all local, state and federal labor regulations regarding breaks. "Our employees are welcome to take their breaks and meals in our designated break room or in any common-use space throughout the airport," company spokesperson Jackie Reedy said. "This policy allows our employees to choose the location that best suits their needs."

Unionized workers at the Barnes & Nobles store in Manhattan's Union Square have made access to chairs and the right to sit down under certain conditions a part of their negotiations for their first contract. "The longer I've been at the job, I've started noticing knee issues, especially because we do a lot of bending down and standing back up when we're shelving books and showing customers things and creating displays," bookseller Bear Spiegel, 28, said. "Being able to have a stool available would be really useful just so I could rest my knees for a couple of minutes throughout the day while I'm doing things on the computer while I'm at the registers." Spiegel's co-workers suggested wearing a knee brace and athletic tape, and those solutions have helped, but it's hard for him to predict what days

he'll need the extra support because his symptoms vary each day, he said.

"There have been days that I've requested a stool and thankfully my managers have allowed me to take them out and use them when needed," Spiegel said.

Barnes & Noble uses chairs or stools routinely for those working off the sales floor when it's sensible to do so, but a lot of a bookseller's work is done on the move, including unpacking, sorting and shelving books, a company spokesperson said. The Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union, which represents about 100,000 workers, has been pushing to include in the contracts it negotiates, including at Barnes & Noble, a guaranteed right to sit during work that can be done seated, said Stuart Appelbaum, the union's president.

During one bargaining session, an employer objected to the demand. Union negotiators used a break that emptied the conference room to underline their position. "The employer came back and saw we had removed all chairs from the negotiating table," Appelbaum said. "I think the point was made."

In the end, the union got the chairs it wanted written into the contract, he said.

Sitting once was a protect-

ed right

Around the turn of the 20th century, most states in the U.S. had laws requiring seating for female workers. Women were increasingly entering the workforce, and there was a fear that if their jobs were too physically taxing, they might not become pregnant, said Eileen Boris, a labor historian and professor at the University of California, Santa Barbara.

Women were seen as the "mothers of the human race, and thus we have to protect motherhood," Boris added. "Almost every state had laws, but they weren't enforced."

Those laws were repealed over time because they applied only to women. One reason was that the women's movement was pushing for equal rights, rather than special treatment, Boris said.

Labor movements in other countries were more successful in establishing requirements about seating. "The English shop movement was much stronger and had more men in it than the U.S.," Boris said.

In 1964, the International Labour Organization, a U.N. agency, adopted workplace standards requiring employers to furnish sufficient and suitable seats, as well as reasonable opportunities for workers to use them. More than 50 countries ratified the agreement, but the U.S. was not one of them.

Today, California, Florida, Massachusetts, Montana, New Jersey, Oregon and Wisconsin are among the states with "right to sit" laws that obligate employers to provide suitable seating for all workers, regardless of gender, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures.

The city of Ann Arbor, Michigan, approved an ordinance in October that requires manufacturers, retail stores, laundromats, hotels, restaurants, hairdressers, barbers and skin care professionals to let workers sit down as long as sitting doesn't interfere with their duties. □

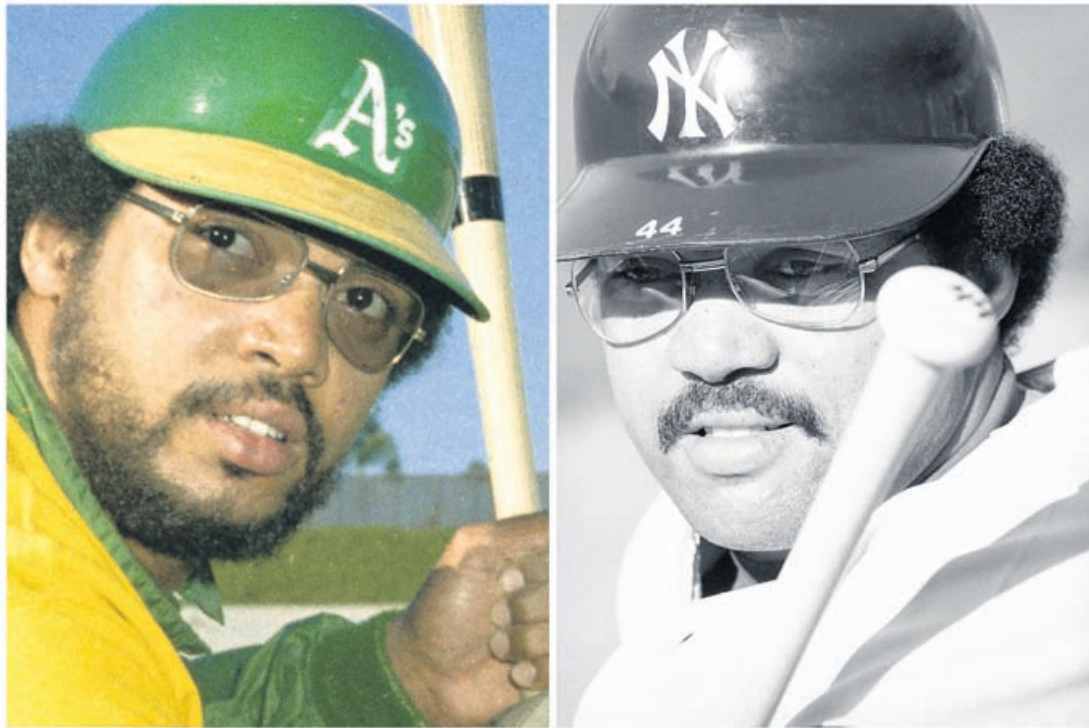
New York Yankees drop ban on beards, 49 years after it was imposed by owner George Steinbrenner

TAMPA, Fla. (AP)—The New York Yankees dropped their ban on beards Friday, 49 years after it was imposed by owner George Steinbrenner, in a move aimed to improve player recruitment as the team tries to win its first World Series title since 2009.

Current owner Hal Steinbrenner, son of The Boss, announced the change Friday before the team's spring training opener.

"My dad was in the military. He believed that a team should look in a disciplined manner," Hal Steinbrenner said during a news conference, flanked by general manager Brian Cashman. "Very important to my father, but again (for) my father, nothing is more important than winning and that's in the back of my mind."

George Steinbrenner announced the facial policy during spring training in 1976, mandating no long hair or beards. Mustaches were allowed. Players complied but some pushed boundaries by going unshaven or letting hair fall



This combo of file photos shows Oakland Athletics player Reggie Jackson, left, in 1973, and as New York Yankees player on Oct. 10, 1978.

Associated Press

over their collars.

Hal Steinbrenner, who succeeded his father as controlling owner in November 2008, discussed the contemplated change with Yankees stars Aaron Judge, Giancarlo Stanton and Gerrit Cole in one-on-one meetings. Steinbrenner

then issued a statement Friday morning that "we will be amending our expectations to allow our players and uniformed personnel to have well-groomed beards moving forward." As recently as Monday, the Yankees had left reminders on the clubhouse chair

of each player to arrive clean shaven the following morning for photo day. All-Star closer Devin Williams, acquired in an offseason trade from Milwaukee, had hair on his chin for his photo. Williams, eligible for free agency after this season, had a beard when he

played for the Brewers.

"The New York Yankees are different," Cashman said. "This is obviously a special place in baseball history. That logo has a lot of meaning behind it and we want our past and our present players to recognize that, and the future players to recognize that. So ultimately there's still going to be things that we're going to hold onto that are important for us, but I think as just Hal said more importantly is always trying to be championship-caliber franchise and chasing winning."

Outfielder Alex Verdugo was forced to trim his previously long hair when he was traded to the Yankees ahead of the 2024 season. George Steinbrenner, who bought the Yankees in 1973, died in 2010.

"I have nothing against long hair per se," George Steinbrenner said in 1976, according to The New York Times. "But I'm trying to instill certain sense of order and discipline in the ballclub because I think discipline is important in an athlete." □

Parker ready for 'anyone' as Dubois replacement heads to Riyadh for heavyweight bout

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia (AP)

— Joseph Parker came to Saudi Arabia to try to win the IBF heavyweight title from Daniel Dubois.

Instead, Parker has turned his attention to Congolese heavyweight Martin Bakole after Dubois reportedly withdrew from Saturday's fight because of a medical issue. Bakole was a last-minute replacement.

"The show goes on. It's not even just in boxing, but it's in life," Parker told Sky Sports. "Things happen, you just have to adjust and adapt to the situation."

Dubois' promoter, Frank Warren, hadn't confirmed the champion's status ahead of Friday's weigh-

in but said Thursday night that Dubois was "being evaluated by a doctor." Bakole posted a video on his Instagram account Friday to say he was awaiting a flight from Kinshasa in Congo.

"I'm on my way," said Bakole, whose itinerary included a stop in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. "I can't wait. I think I will shock the world tomorrow. A boxer is like a soldier, anytime they ask you to go to war, always be ready."

Even though there's no shot at a world title Saturday, the Parker-Bakole winner would be in line to fight Oleksandr Usyk for the Ukrainian's WBO belt. The WBO announced the

winner would become the mandatory challenger.

"I said it before, I'll fight anyone and everyone, doesn't matter who it is," Parker said. "Thanks to Martin for putting up his hand. He's a tough fighter. I look forward to that challenge."

Parker (35-3, 23 KOs) is a former WBO champion. The New Zealander won the belt in December 2016 when he beat Andy Ruiz and lost it to Anthony Joshua 15 months later.

Bakole (21-1, 16 KOs) weighed over 280 pounds in his most recent fight when he stopped Jared Anderson in the fifth round last August in Los Angeles. Dubois was hoping to win

and then take on Usyk later this year. He made his first title defense last September with a brutal fifth-

round knockout of Joshua in front of 96,000 fans at Wembley Stadium. □



Joseph Parker in action against Deontay Wilder during their match in the Day of Reckoning Boxing Event, in the Kingdom Arena, Saudi Arabia, on Dec. 24, 2023.

Associated Press

Ovechkin's record chase, Columbus outdoor game and trade deadline await down stretch of NHL season

By **STEPHEN WHYNO**
 AP Hockey Writer

The NHL season resumes with 14 games on Saturday and 10 more Sunday with every team in action at least once this weekend coming out of the break for the massively successful 4 Nations Face-Off.

The puck drops for the play-offs on April 19. The league's 32 teams are set to play in a total of 422 games before the four-round race for the Stanley Cup begins in earnest.

"There's still a lot of hockey left to be played," center Pierre-Luc Dubois of the Eastern Conference-leading Washington Capitals said Friday. "Some teams their playoff races will start with 18 games left and some will start with 10, but I think the pace really goes up pretty soon."

Alex Ovechkin's pursuit of Wayne Gretzky's career goals record, the outdoor game between the Columbus Blue Jackets and Detroit Red Wings at Ohio State's Stadium, the March 7 trade deadline and various injury situations coming out of the 4 Nations are among the things to watch down the stretch.

Ovechkin's GR8 chase
 The Capitals captain in his 20th season is 16 back of passing Gretzky's mark of 894 goals that long seemed unapproachable. Coach



Washington Capitals left wing Alex Ovechkin (8) skates with the puck during the first period of an NHL hockey game against the Utah Hockey Club, Sunday, Feb. 9, 2025, in Washington.

Associated Press

Spencer Carbery expects again to see Ovechkin, now 39 years old, refreshed and ready to roll.

"I just am expecting for him to be a real impactful player for us in these last 27 games of the season," Carbery said. "He looks great. He's got tons of energy. It feels like he had a real good break to be able to get some work in but also get mentally refreshed for this last little stretch."

The odds are still against Ovechkin breaking the record this season. BetMGM Sportsbook still favors him not getting there.

Ovechkin scored 15 goals in his final 27 games last season,

a pace that would tie Gretzky. But it also might be foolish to bet against the greatest scorer of this — and soon any — generation.

"Everyone's excited about it, looking forward to it," teammate Dylan Strome said. "It's going to be tough to get it this year, but if anyone can do it, I think it's him."

Taking it outside
 The Blue Jackets are set to play in an outdoor game for the first time in franchise history March 1 when they host the Red Wings at Ohio Stadium. The site of so many college football rivalry games between Ohio State and Michigan is also a nice

chance to showcase a surprise season of success for Columbus.

With top defenseman Zach Werenski and new coach Dean Evason leading the way, the Blue Jackets are firmly in contention and getting captain Boone Jenner back after missing the first three-quarters of the season following shoulder surgery.

"I haven't had this much fun playing hockey in a long time and being around a group of guys," Werenski said during the 4 Nations tournament. "We're just enjoying it. We're having fun. We're working hard. We've all bought into our team game. No one

cares who has the success."

The Red Wings are also in the race — one point ahead of Columbus — thanks to a mid-season coaching change that paid big dividends. Detroit has won 15 of 21 games since Todd McLellan replaced Derek Lalonde behind the bench, and duking it out with the Blue Jackets puts an even brighter spotlight on the Stadium Series game between them.

Trade season

There was a flurry of moves before the 4 Nations, with Colorado, Carolina and Chicago completing a three-team blockbuster that sent Mikko Rantanen and Taylor Hall to the Hurricanes and Martin Necas to the Avalanche, the New York Rangers landing J.T. Miller from Vancouver and Dallas acquiring Mikael Granlund and Codi Ceci in a trade with San Jose.

But there's plenty more in that vein to come before the 3 p.m. EST deadline on March 7.

The New York Islanders have a big decision to make with big center Brock Nelson, a pending unrestricted free agent who seems unlikely to re-sign. They are four points back of the second and final wild-card spot in the East, and 82-year-old general manager Lou Lamoriello's uncertain future makes it impossible to know what will happen with Nelson.

4 Nations Face-Off final between U.S. and Canada drew record betting action



Canada captain Sidney Crosby, right, hoists the trophy after defeating the United States following an overtime period of the 4 Nations Face-Off championship hockey game, Thursday, Feb. 20, 2025, in Boston.

Associated Press

By **MARK ANDERSON**
 AP Sports Writer

LAS VEGAS (AP) — Canada's 3-2 overtime victory over the United States in the championship game of the 4 Nations Face-Off on Thursday night set single-game hockey betting records.

BetMGM Sportsbook said it was the most bet-on hockey game in its history, and it was 2 1/2 times greater than any NHL game this season. Betting also was strong throughout the tournament. Five of the games at BetMGM were among the seven most wagered-on hockey games this season.

"The 4 Nations tournament was a great success for BetMGM," BetMGM trading manager Halvor Ege-land said. "Canada winning was a good outcome for the sportsbook."

The U.S. was a 1 1/2-goal favorite. Both teams were -110 on the money line at the puck drop.

Caesars Sportsbook also said the championship attracted heavy action, and that it was second in bets placed only to last season's Game 7 victory by the Florida Panthers over the Edmonton Oilers in the Stanley Cup Final.

That game also had more than two times the number of bettors, bets and money gambled at Caesars than any NHL game this season. "A Game 7 atmosphere and style of play is what we anticipated and it was exactly what we got in every which way," Caesars head of hockey Karry Shreeve said. "Customers were all over the USA out of the gates, especially when they went down 1-0 and were around +150 to bet on to win. ... The betting only ramped up when the game did go to OT, proving everyone was locked in until the very end."